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C O N F I D E N T I A L KINSHASA 000175

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [KDEM](#) [CG](#) [ELECTIONS](#)  
SUBJECT: VICE PRESIDENT RUBERWA STILL CONFIDENT OF  
ELECTORAL PROSPECTS

Classified By: PolCouns MSanderson, reasons 1.4 b/d.

1. (C) During a January 25 discussion, VP Azarias Ruberwa (President of the Rally for Congolese Democracy party) told PolCouns that he is confident of his chances to win election as president of the DRC. (Note: Ruberwa was unanimously nominated as his party's presidential candidate during the party's convention in early December 2005. End Note.) He continues to point to his increasing popularity (a recent poll showed him outperforming fellow Vice President Jean-Pierre Bemba, head of the rival party Movement for the Liberation of the Congo or MLC) as evidence that he can win a national election. When pressed, Ruberwa admitted that if he cannot actually win the election he would like to be in second or third position after the first round of the presidential elections (the Congolese constitution envisions a runoff among the top two aspirants if no candidate achieves 51% of the vote initially), in order to be well positioned to negotiate for the Prime Ministerial post.

2. (C) Ruberwa is less confident of his party's chances, however, and continues to actively consider possible electoral alliances to bolster the possibility that his RCD party will form part of the majority coalition (the most likely outcome) in the elected National Assembly. (Note: This is a crucial consideration, as the constitution requires the president to name the prime minister from the majority -- or a majority coalition -- in the Assembly. Even if Ruberwa performs above expectations, his party would not benefit unless Ruberwa's coattails are long since both the first presidential election and the parliamentary elections will take place at the same time, thereby removing any "boost" that a party might otherwise have achieved from the positioning of its presidential candidate. End Note.) Ruberwa is continuing his two-pronged strategy in relation to Etienne Tshishikedi's UDPS party; i.e., publicly urging Tshishikedi to take part in elections while simultaneously

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using his RCD candidates in the UDPS stronghold provinces of Kasai West and East to woo disaffected UDPS voters at the grassroots. (Comment: It is still far from clear that Tshishikedi will actually take part in the elections. His

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non-participation could effectively give Ruberwa's campaign, and that of his party, a boost. End Comment.) Ruberwa also wondered, rhetorically, if President Kabila's PPRD party would be open to an alliance with the RCD (party hard-liners in both groups oppose such a coalition), and at what cost.

3. (C) Comment: Ruberwa, a decent and intelligent man, is not a professional politician, and therefore continues to overestimate his electoral potential. The reality is that in this election, neither he nor his party will do as well as he hopes, in large part because prevailing anti-Tutsi/anti-Rwanda prejudices remain strong and are easily inflamed by real or perceived Rwandan aggression. (The RCD party originally was established by Rwanda as a proxy and until relatively recently many of its officials still responded more to Kigali than Kinshasa.) Some of the party's non-Tutsi members, such as its candidates in the Kasais, seem to stand a good chance in their own electoral districts, but Ruberwa's candidacy will not benefit from their success. Ruberwa and Kabila have spoken privately on at least two occasions about a possible alliance, but Kabila remains concerned about the "Tutsi factor," while Ruberwa is unwilling to abandon his presidential aspirations. (One of the PPRD's demands reportedly is that whoever wishes an eventual alliance with the party cannot have a candidate running against Joseph Kabila for election.) Likewise, Ruberwa is an unlikely choice for Prime Minister,

particularly if Olivier Kamitatu (formerly of the MLC but now heading his own newly-formed group, and who may be mending fences with Kabila and his party) is available. Ruberwa likely will have a role to play in the post-electoral government, although a post such as Attorney General or Minister of Justice might better suit his personality and talents.

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